

Dene Nation Press Release: November 2, 2017

“We, the Dene, need to govern ourselves, as a right to self-determination,” declares Dene Nation

In response to Northwest Territories’ Premier Bob McLeod’s statement in a news release November 1, 2017, on a ‘red alert for an urgent national debate on the future of the north’, Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus said the Dene Nation welcomes a full debate proposition on where the north stands and where it could be going.

Erasmus said, “Dene programs and services money from the federal government goes directly to the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), which is more than half of their total budget. This funding needs to come directly to the Dene, as it is in the south, we need to make our own decisions, not the GNWT.”

The Dene also welcomes discussion on resource revenue sharing and devolution of authority that was transferred to the GNWT by the former Conservative government. “Powers were devolved to the GNWT without consent of the Dene. The 1969 White Paper, designed to take away authority from First Nations across Canada, is being implemented in the NWT,” said Erasmus.

A national debate will provide recognition and support for the Dene. “The Dene need to be a growing part in the economy. It’s rated high as being one of the most pressing issues for the Dene Nation, “ added Erasmus. “... we are the only First Nation not governing ourselves in Canada, and we are forced to be part of a public government, — we need Dene government.”

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# Reconciliation Efforts Welcomed By Inuvialuit Regional Corporation



NOVEMBER 06, 2017

As an Indigenous people, Inuvialuit have long held a special relationship with the Crown. This relationship has not always been a positive one, such as the moratorium; but, lately, it has begun to improve. Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) Chair and Chief Executive Officer Duane Ningaqsiq Smith welcomes the federal government's efforts to forge a direct working relationship with Inuvialuit.

In particular, Smith applauds the refreshing approach the federal government has taken when it comes to Inuit and Crown relations. As part of the Inuit leadership team involved in the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee, he appreciates the renewed relationship and expects the collaboration to help tackle critical issues in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) and across Inuit Nunangat.

"The Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee (ICPC) encourages reconciliation by establishing shared priority areas between Inuit and Canada and allows work to be completed jointly to pursue positive outcomes," Smith said. "Having a separate space for Inuit Nunangat-specific policy to be discussed, and implemented, will strengthen self-determination and advance reconciliation for all Inuit."

One specific issue that has been designated a priority area through the ICPC is the development of innovative approaches to deliver on the housing needs of Inuit. IRC has already proven to be a trailblazer for this initiative,

demonstrated by the present construction of a six-plex in Inuvik and a four-plex in Tuktoyaktuk – completed through funding provided by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and in partnership with Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Several additional builds in the remaining Inuvialuit communities are in the design phase and will be constructed over the next year.

“Working together to deliver culturally-relevant community infrastructure helps support our beneficiaries both socially and economically. Affordable housing options help address the high housing needs in our region and the utilization of local companies helps support local businesses and grow capacity throughout the ISR,” Smith said.

IRC has long been a leader in collaborating between governments to positively enhance specified objectives of regional importance. One such example is *Project Jewel* – an on-the-land wellness program that relies on the natural healing that comes from participants being immersed in a culturally-significant setting. Utilizing funding from Health Canada and the territorial government, *Project Jewel* is administered by IRC and assists those beginning or continuing their healing journey as they learn to manage stress, grief, trauma, or any other emotions that may be present.

“The impact that *Project Jewel* has on people in our region is profound. It has benefitted everyone from youth, adults, couples, and entire families – not to mention the secondary connections that each of them have,” Smith said. “It is an excellent example of the success that can come from programs that co-exist across multiple levels of government with an overall purpose that is clearly defined.”

“By working directly with us, we are able to create culturally-relevant opportunities for beneficiaries, stimulate our economy, improve local program delivery and ensure accountability for the use of federal funds,” says Smith. “The Inuvialuit Final Agreement belongs to all of us and this is a positive approach to the implementation of its objectives.”

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## **NEWS RELEASE: PREMIER MCLEOD “RED ALERT” STATEMENT**

Behchokò, NT (November 7, 2017) –Tłıchq Government is an Indigenous government and modern-day treaty holder. We are deeply invested in the future of the North, and the success and vitality of our economies, people and communities.

Our treaty—the Tłıchq Agreement—represents the foundation of how our government and other governments in the North will work together. The Tłıchq Government, Government of Canada, and Government of the Northwest Territories all agreed in the Tłıchq Agreement to the recognition of Tłıchq rights of self-government and jurisdiction. We are committed to working together to advance those rights in a spirit of partnership, respect and collaboration.

The Tłıchq Agreement recognizes that Tłıchq Government has the power and responsibility to make decisions about the future of our people. This includes increasingly exercising our jurisdiction over matters such as Tłıchq citizen’s education, housing, culture and language, among other areas. This includes how programs are designed, run and implemented. The exercise of this jurisdiction is not “a re-emergence of colonialism” or a return to “a reserve system” but represents decisions that are being made by Tłıchq, for Tłıchq, now and into the future.

Tłıchq Government is working with Canada to breathe life into the promises of the Tłıchq Agreement that have not yet been fully implemented. We are discussing how to better support and advance our self-government goals to benefit Tłıchq citizens as we take on increasing responsibility for programs and services for our citizens. On November 1, 2017, we met with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Minister Bennett and Minister Philpott, to discuss implementing these promises in the Tłıchq Agreement. We have made good progress together—as partners—in those discussions. The Tłıchq Agreement ensures that not only do we have a seat at the table in those discussions, but that we are a critical and essential voice. This important work needs to be supported by the GNWT.

This spirit of partnership and collaboration infuses the Tłıchq Agreement. It is up to us—as leaders—to live up to this partnership that is embodied in the Tłıchq Agreement and work together to advance the constitutional promises that it sets out.

The Tłıchq Government takes no position on the moratorium on Arctic Oil and Gas exploration, that is a discussion for those parties directly affected by the decision.

However, the Tłıchq Government is disappointed to hear Premier McLeod's comments on the Government of Canada's relationship with, and support for the people of the north. These concerns should be raised and discussed with us, as treaty-partners and neighbouring governments, to discuss a path forward. We have created the forums through our Intergovernmental Agreements for these discussions. The respect that Premier McLeod asks for from the Government of Canada, Tłıchq Government expects of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

We will be reaching out to Premier McLeod's office to schedule a meeting. We are hopeful that through respectful and direct discussions between our governments we can identify a path forward that supports and upholds the spirit, intent and promises of the Tłıchq Agreement and supports the progress we are making, instead of attempting to undermine it.

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Uphold the rights, interest and benefits of the Gwich'in in reference to the Constitution Act, Treaty 11 and the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement; and

Receive, preserve and enhance the capital and the land and other benefits transferred to the Gwich'in pursuant to the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement signed in 1992.

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## **Gwich'in Tribal Council**

*Gwich'in land, culture & economy for a better future*

### **News Release**

#### **Gwich'in open to discussion & consultation about Premier's "Red Alert" statement**

**INUVIK (November 3, 2017)** – The Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC), in response to NWT Premier Robert McLeod's 'Red Alert' statement on the future of Canada's North, welcomes a national debate on the issues but was surprised by this announcement and the lack of discussion and consultation with Indigenous groups prior to the Premier's strong statements, particularly given references to a "re-emergence of colonialism".

"Any debate of this kind would have to be conducted in a manner that respects and reinforces the nation-to-nation relationships between the Gwich'in and government – that is the only way to move beyond colonialism and toward reconciliation", said Grand Chief Bobbie Jo Greenland Morgan. "I think the Premier and the GTC both understand that in the modern treaty context in the NWT, land claim groups don't just participate in decision making – we are the decision-makers, so I was quite surprised by his comments. We would have thought the Premier would engage us before advancing such a strong position, just like the GNWT is saying that it should have been consulted prior to the federal government's new five-year ban on new oil and gas development in the Arctic".

The GTC welcomes the call for an open conversation with all stakeholders in regards to the future and recognizes the need for long-term thinking about economic development in the region, especially with present uncertainty about the future of the Mackenzie Gas Project.

"As part of our ongoing work to ensure full and meaningful implementation of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement - including economic and resource development under specific chapters of the agreement – we are always looking for opportunities to help both governments understand our interpretation of the land claim and how to work with us to build prosperity on a foundation of traditional Gwich'in values", said Greenland-Morgan. "It is clear in the present case that both levels of government have room for improvement and there are lessons to be learned about how nation-to-nation dialogue should take place with land claim groups".

#### **Gwich'in Tribal Council Background**

Established in 1992, the Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC) is an indigenous organization that represents Gwich'in Land Claim Participants in the Mackenzie Delta region of the Northwest Territories and across Canada. Key objectives of the GTC are to:

Protect and preserve the rights, interest and benefits of the Gwich'in in reference to the use, ownership and management of lands, waters and resources in the Gwich'in Settlement Area in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon;

Retain, preserve and enhance the traditional and cultural values, customs and language of the Gwich'in in a changing society;

Develop and promote responsible economic, social, educational and cultural programs that will enable the Gwich'in to become self-sufficient and fully participating members in a global society;